

RIVER STAGES AND FLOODS FOR SEPTEMBER 1948

ELMER R. NELSON

River stages were mostly below normal during September east of the Mississippi River, except in an area extending north to northeastward from Georgia to the central portion of Ohio and the southwestern tip of Pennsylvania. West of the Mississippi it was above normal in the north-central portion and at a few other widely scattered points. The greatest negative departure was at Vicksburg, Miss., where the Mississippi River averaged 8 feet below normal. The greatest positive departure was at Swan Lake, Miss., where the Tallahatchie averaged 10.2 feet above normal. The only flooding during the month was on the lower Rio Grande in Texas, the Atchafalaya in Louisiana, and the Broad River in South Carolina.

Precipitation during the month was below normal except along portions of the coastal areas of the Middle and South Atlantic States, the Gulf States, and the Pacific Northwest. It was also above normal at a few scattered inland points. The greatest precipitation (twice normal) occurred along the Gulf Coast. Heavy rains occurred over southern Florida in connection with the hurricane of September 21, causing extensive flooding in the Lake Okeechobee area. The section most severely inundated occurred in the vicinity of Clewiston, where 15 inches of rain occurred during and just prior to the storm.

Atlantic Slope drainage.—Excessive rains (7.70 inches) occurred over the Broad River in the vicinity of Blairs, S. C., on the 6th, with most of it falling between 8 a. m. and 12 noon, causing light flooding at that point but no damage of consequence. High stages, however, were reached on the small streams in the vicinity, causing wash-outs in the road and railroad beds. A Southern Railroad passenger train ran into a washed-out culvert about ¼ mile north of Blairs, killing the fireman, injuring the engineer, and causing considerable damage to the train. Crops were badly damaged in the area.

Atchafalaya Basin.—Light flooding occurred on the Atchafalaya River at Morgan City, La., on the 13th, due to strong south and southeast winds caused by the passage of a small cyclonic disturbance over southwestern Louisiana. These winds caused the water to back up the river to slightly above bank-full stage from 6:15 a. m. to 2:50 p. m. No damage was reported.

West Gulf of Mexico drainage.—Heavy rains over southern Texas during the second week of the month caused light to moderate flooding on the lower Rio Grande below Rio Grande City, Tex.

FLOOD STAGE REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 1948

[All dates in September unless otherwise specified]

River and station	Flood stage	Above flood stages—dates		Crest	
		From—	To—	Stage	Date
ATLANTIC SLOPE DRAINAGE					
Broad: Blairs, S. C.	<i>Feet</i> 14	7	7	<i>Feet</i> 15.8	7
MISSISSIPPI SYSTEM					
<i>Atchafalaya Basin</i>					
Atchafalaya: Morgan City, La.	6	13	13	6.5	13
WEST GULF OF MEXICO DRAINAGE					
Rio Grande:					
Rio Grande City, Tex.	21	11	12	33.0	12
Hidalgo, Tex.	21	13	15	22.7	14
Mercedes, Tex.	21	12	17	23.1	14
Brownsville, Tex.	18	16	17	18.4	16

ESTIMATED FLOOD LOSSES FOR 1946¹

BENNETT SWENSON

Monetary losses from floods in the United States during 1946, estimated at about \$71,000,000, were considerably smaller than in the two previous years. The loss in life was considerably less than in 1945, with 28 lives lost as compared with 91 during 1945. The savings resulting from the flood forecasting and warning service was reported at about \$5,500,000.

A major flood with record stages occurred in the Susquehanna River Basin during the last few days of May, causing considerable property damage and loss of several lives. Unusual early floods occurred in eastern Iowa and adjoining portions of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota in January. The greatest flood since September 1921, occurred in the vicinity of San Antonio, Tex., during September, with the loss of several lives and property damage of several million dollars.

¹ Flood loss statistics for 1944 and 1945 were published in the June 1948 issue of the MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW.